

Gender Roles, Personality Traits and Expectations of Women and Men Towards Marriage

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to determine whether gender roles, self-esteem and personality predict the expectations of men and women' attitudes about marriage. The sample of the study consists 491 people, 345 women and 146 men. All cases are single and has college degree. In this research, Gender Formation Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection Scale and Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale were used. In this study the marriage expectations of women and men was evaluated by using the "Multiple Regression Analysis (Stepwise Method)" method. All variables are included in the analysis for both women and men. The results of the multiple regression analysis sociotropy, autonomy and traditional gender roles variables were found to be significant predictors of the marriage expectations of women. As a result of the multiple regression analysis performed to predict the marriage expectations of men, it was seen that sociotropy variable was significant predictor. According to the results, as the sociotropy scores of men increases the positive expectations towards marriage also increase. According to the findings, it was seen that the variables that predicts the marriage expectations of women and men are different from each other.

Keywords: Gender Roles, Marriage Expectations, Sociotropy, Autonomy

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Introduction

Humans are the creatures that need to stay together, cannot live alone, and are motivated to establish intimate relationships. There are several types of relationship styles in our lives, and probably one of the most important one among them is marriage. Marriage and expectations from marriage can be seen as a contractual obligation designed to gain social, cultural and financial gains, as well as a personal choice designed to strengthen the bond between two people dominated by romantic intimacy. Many studies show that the problems in relationships in marriages affect the psychological health of individuals, and the conflicts and problems of marriage are closely associated with depression (Nho et al., 2017; Whitton & Whisman, 2010; Bookwala & Jacobs, 2004) and anxiety disorders (Hafner & Spence, 1988). Therefore, beliefs towards marriage and personal expectations related to marriage are significant.

Marriage can be experienced as a developmental task and occupies the individual's mind with whom and how to do it at different age periods of life. This mental occupation is not only affected by the characteristics of the individual such as personality, but also by the cultural structure and traditions of the society, starting from the family and expanding further (Kazemi-pour, 2009). Gender can be defined through how the society regards women and men rather than their biological differences (Waite & Gallagher, 2001; Kaufman, 2005). Gender reflects as a number of differences in vocational, social and educational parts of lives of women and men (Buss, 1995; Yilmaz et.al., 2009). Gender roles shape the responsibilities of being a woman and a man. In traditional marriage perception, men earn money and support the house; and women assuming the duty of being a mother and being responsible for housework. Although there are changes in traditional gender roles with the participation of women in business life (Eagly et al., 2020), the equivalence in the sharing of domestic duties could not be achieved and still the woman works both at home and at work. On the other hand, it is observed that man generally has power (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). The journey of the woman in this process is being a mother, giving birth to a son, and taking part in business life (Zheng, 2016). This distribution of tasks also determines what is expected from marriage. While evaluating the marriage expectation within the framework of gender roles, differences other than similarities stand out. Because these differences in gender roles determine the hierarchy and disadvantages in the marriage process (Thompson, 1993).

It is seen that expectations about marriage differs depending on the gender, and women have a more optimistic attitude towards marriage when compared to men (Alqashan & Alkandari, 2010; Bruce et al., 2004). Gender roles contributes to the difference between women and men. When gender comes into question, personality traits, roles and responsibilities of women and men that are predetermined by the society also step in. These differences reveal themselves as determiners in designating expectations and roles related to how women and men behave and how they think

depending on the culture they live in. In brief, gender roles determine the traits which structure women and men socially with their behaviors and thoughts (Hiller & Philliber, 1986).

The differences of women and men in expectations towards marriage roles also draw attention. The gender roles can come into play in these differences, and the fact that the individuals do not want to leave these roles becomes effective. The perception of expectation of an individual affects the role of their partners. Waller & McLanahan (2005), states that the expectation of a man has a powerful impact in moving the relationship towards marriage whereas the expectation of a woman determines whether the parties will continue their relationship or not (Amato & Booth, 1995).

Women show a less tendency towards traditional roles when compared to men (Faulkner et al., 2005). On the contrary, marriage satisfaction levels of the men who have a more tendency towards traditional gender roles reveal a lesser decrease over time (Losrocco & Spitze, 2007). While women look for a more egalitarian attitude in marriage, men play the part of service provider (Balık, 2017). Expectations from marriage also differ according to age, education level and socio-economic level. As the level of education and income increases, and young couples can turn into more egalitarian gender roles where individuals support each other (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Expectations towards marriage bring about disagreements and generating solutions to these disagreements. Personality traits of individuals has a determining quality in frequency of conflicts and generating solutions (Doğan, 2010; Spotts, Lichtenstein, Pedersen et.al., 2005). In marriage, the personality of a spouse affects how the other spouse will interact (Gaunt, 2006). Personality also reveals itself as a factor in similarities of couples. Similar personality traits increase the satisfaction in marriage (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006).

Perspectives on personality which has a significant place in psychology also differ (Beck, 1983). Beck classified personality as sociotropy and autonomy in terms of cognitive theory. Sociotropy, which is placed in this classification, is defined as the investment of a person in the positive communication with other people (Özdemir, 2016). People with sociotropic personality trait need social support and the thoughts of others more in order to feel better about themselves. Autonomy, which is also placed in this personality classification, investments of the people in order to protect and increase their independency, freedom of movement and individual right become prominent. People with higher autonomy traits like directing their own activities and achieving goals that are important to them, and they obtain satisfaction from these (Murray et al., 2006). While sociotropic individuals are sensitive about situations such as weakening social bonds, termination of relationships and rejections, autonomous individuals have a tendency to reject being controlled by others, and to give importance to success and independency. In addition, it is accepted that the self-esteem of individuals is a significant factor in determining the quality of their relationships. It is reported that the individuals with high self-esteem evaluate their intimate relationships more positively when compared to the individuals with lower self-esteem (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2015).

Therefore, it is predicted that positive or negative perceptions of individuals towards their own selves affect their evaluation about romantic partners and how their relationships proceed. When studies are reviewed, it is obvious that most of them reflect the Western culture, and no studies examining expectations towards marriage from the perspective of women and men in Turkey was found. In terms of preventive mental health, it is important that individuals have rational expectations from marriage and their personality traits are defined since marriages with irrational expectations can become the source of several psychiatric and psychological problems. Moreover, understating the cultural factors that affect the psychological health contributes to a more effective mental health service. Thus, in the current study, the aim is to examine the marriage expectations of women and men in terms gender roles and personality traits, and self-esteem which were not studied before. It is thought that the study will contribute to structuring of mental health services by revealing these relationships in terms of Turkish culture.

Method

Sample

The sample of the current study consists of 491 participants, 345 females and 146 males, who are university graduates between 18-53 years of age. The participants are all single. The convenient sampling method was used in the formation of the sample group.

Research Model

In the study, relational screening model was used in order to determine in what level gender roles and personality traits predict the expectations of women and men towards marriage. Relational screening model aims to determine the existence and/or level of changing together of two or more variables (Karasar,2000).

Data Collection Tools

In the current study, Socialization of Gender Norms Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection Scale and Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale were used.

Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection Scale-ARMSS: ARMSS was developed by Cobb et.al (2003) in order to measure limiting beliefs about mate selection. The scale is in 7-point likert type and has 32 items. In order to determine the construct validity of ARMSS, principle component analysis was made, and a seven-factor construct was defined. At the same time, the scale provides a total score. For the internal consistency, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated as $\alpha=.88$, and the Cronbach Alpha coefficients of seven subscales were between .64-.98. The test-retest reliability which was conducted in a two-week interval was found .90, and correlation coefficients were obtained between .59-.92 for seven subscales (Cobb et al., 2003).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Sub-Scale: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was developed by Rosenberg (1965). The scale which is formed by multiple choice questions has 63 items and 12 subscales (Korkmaz, 1996). In the current study, a ten-item short version of self-esteem scale was used. Self-esteem scale includes five positive and five negative statements and is in four-point Likert type. The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Çuhadaroğlu, 1986. The validity coefficient was found .71 in the validity study. The test-retest reliability coefficient was found .75 for self-esteem scale.

Socialization of Gender Norms Scale (SGNS): The scale was developed by Epstein (2008) and aims to determine the gender role messages received from the environment in the socialization process of the individuals. The original scale consisted of five subscales, which are traditional gender roles, egalitarian gender roles, being big and strong (enduring), being well and nice, and body awareness, and 23 items. The scale was adapted in Turkish language by Arıcı (2011). The Turkish version consisted of two subscales and 19 items. The first subscale was named as “traditional gender roles”, and the second subscale was named as “egalitarian gender roles”. In the first subscale, there are five items whereas there are 4 items in the second subscale. The scale is in four-point Likert type answered by choosing one of the options ranging from “never” “little” “a little” and “very”. Each item is graded between 0-3, and 15 points for egalitarian messages and 42 points for traditional messages can be obtain at most (Arıcı,2011).

Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale: The scale was developed by Beck et.al. (1983). The scale was formed to measure two different personality traits (Bieling, Olshan, Beck & Brown, 1998). There are 60 questions that measure sociotropic personality trait that values relationships with people and autonomous personality trait that values success, independency and freedom. 30 of the questions belongs to the sociotropy subscale whereas the other 30 questions belong to autonomy subscale. There are three dimensions under the sociotropy subscale. These are concern about disapproval, concern over separation and pleasing others. There are three dimensions under the autonomy, and these are individual achievement, freedom from control and preference for solitude (Şahin et al., 1993; Savaşır & Şahin, 1997).

The high scores obtained from sociotropy subscale implies higher sociotropic personality trait whereas the high scores obtained from autonomy subscale implies higher autonomous personality trait. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Şahin et.al (1993). The internal consistency Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the scale were found for sociotropy and autonomy .70 and .81 respectively. The Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the student sample were respectively found .83 and .81(Savaşır & Şahin, 1997).

Demographic Information Form: Information related to the participants' age, gender and education levels were obtained using the demographic information form prepared by the researcher.

Analysis

Before the analysis of the data, the data were assessed in terms of incorrect or incomplete answers. In the next step, the kurtosis and skewness values of the variables were assessed in order to examine the regression analysis assumptions. In this context, it was seen that the kurtosis and skewness coefficients are in the limits of ± 1 , and this finding was evaluated as the proof of the existence of the normal distribution (Tabachnick et al., 2007). In the next step, in order to determine whether there is a multicollinearity, variance inflation factors (VIF) were assessed, and no VIF values greater than 5 was found. The standard z values of the variables were calculated, and Mahalonobis distance test was conducted. In terms of all variables, five data were excluded which was determined as the univariate extreme value. If the variables predict the marriage expectations of women and men was determined using "Multiple Regression Analysis (Stepwise Method)". All the variables were analyzed both for women and for men. The significance value in the study was accepted as $p < .05$. the obtained data were analyzed using SPSS 21 package program.

Results

In the study, the dependent variable is marriage expectation, the independent variables are self-esteem, egalitarian gender roles, traditional gender roles, sociotropy and autonomy. Regression analysis was conducted separately for women and men. The descriptive statistics of variables for women and men are given separately in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Women (N=319)		Men (N=141)	
	Mean	S.d.	Mean	S.d.
Marriage expectation	86,83	9,62	88,04	9,94
Self esteem	28,53	6,3	28,68	6,12
Egalitarian gender roles	17,5	3,47	16,55	2,83
Traditional gender roles	35,47	8,01	37,67	6,84
Sociotropy	89,23	18,08	93,47	16,3
Autonomy	104,92	16,54	108,09	15,84

In order to conduct Regression analysis, the relationship between variables were examined in the study. The results are given in Table 2. As seen in the table, it was found that there is a positive significant correlation between egalitarian gender roles and self-esteem ($r=.16$); there is a positive significant correlation between traditional gender roles and marriage expectation ($r=.23$); there is a positive significant correlation between sociotropy and marriage expectation ($r=.31$); there is a positive significant correlation between sociotropy and traditional gender roles($r=.34$); there is a

positive significant correlation between autonomy and marriage expectation ($r=.16$), self-esteem ($r=.12$), traditional gender roles ($r=.18$) and sociotropy ($r=.18$).

Table 2. Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Marriage expectation	1.00					
2. Self esteem	.080	1.00				
3. Egalitarian gender roles	.056	.160*	1.00			
4. Traditional gender roles	.229*	-.086	-.089	1.00		
5. Sociotropy	.311*	-.017	.074	.345*	1.00	
6. Autonomy	.165*	.123*	.042	.179*	.182*	1.00

* $p < 0.05$

The results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to predict marriage expectations of the women revealed that sociotropy, autonomy and traditional gender roles are significant predictors ($R=.394$, $R^2=.15$, $F_{(3,315)}=19,32$, $p<.05$). When the t values related to the significance of regression coefficients are examined, it is seen that the biggest contributions to the prediction of women's marriage expectations are respectively sociotropy, autonomy and traditional gender roles variables. According to the findings, the women with high sociotropy, autonomy and traditional gender role acceptance can be said to have high marriage expectations. As a result, as seen in the Table 3, the model explains 15% of the variance related to marriage expectations of women. Self-esteem and egalitarian gender roles variables do not predict the marriage expectations of women significantly.

Table 3. Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis Results of The Prediction of Women's Marriage Expectations

N: 319	B	Std. Error	β	t	F	R	R^2	R^2 Change
(1 st Step) (Constant)	70,854	2,563		27,643				
					40,456			
Sociotropy	.179	.028	.336	6,360		.336	.110	.113
(2 nd Step) (Constant)	62,062	3,804		16,313				
Sociotropy	.166	.028	.312	5.903	25,560			
Autonomy	.095	.031	.163	3.094		.373	.134	.026
(3 rd Step) (Constant)	59.213	3.949		14,992				
Sociotropy	.147	.029	.275	5.060				
Autonomy	.084	.031	.145	2.733	19,315	.394	.155	.160
Traditional gender roles	.161	.066	.134	2.452				

As a result of the multiple regression analysis of the prediction of men's marriage expectation, it is seen that sociotropy variable is a significant predictor ($R=.244$, $R^2=.053$, $F_{(1,139)}=8.81$, $p<.05$). when the results are examined, when men's sociotropy score which is a sub-dimension of personality trait and focusing on establishing an intimate relationship or wishing to be loved and accepted by others increase, their positive expectations towards marriage also increases. Autonomy, self-esteem and gender roles variables do not predict the marriage expectations of men significantly.

Table 4. Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis Results of The Prediction of Men's Marriage Expectations

N: 319	B	Std. Error	β	t	F	R	R ²	Change
1. Aşama) (Constant)	74,124	4,759		15,576	8,813			
Sociotropy	.179	.050	.244	2,969		.244	.053	.060

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the findings obtained from the study, the variables predicting marriage expectations of women and men are different. According to the results, the expectations and attitudes of women towards marriage are affected by their personality traits and traditional gender roles. On the other hand, the expectations of men are affected by sociotropic personality trait which is linked to establishing intimate relationships and valuing the feeling of trust in the relationships. People with sociotropic personality traits focus on establishing intimate relationships and want to be loved and accepted by others. In the regression model of women, that sociotropy is the strongest predictor stems from the communitarian/collectivist cultural features of Turkish society. Also, that sociotropy personality trait is the highest and the only variable related to the positive expectations towards marriage can be linked to the beliefs about men's being supposed to satisfy the expectations of the society. Moreover, consistent with the current study's findings, the studies show that the men in Western countries become more compassionate and start to value human relationships in time (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000; Twenge, 1997; Pleck, 1975), and women define themselves in the context of their relationships (Acitelli et al., 1999). In the literature, it is stated that women tend to have more sociotropic personality trait whereas men tend to have more autonomous personality trait (Sato & McCann, 1998; McBride et al., 2005; Newman et al., 2009; Raesei et al., 2015). In the current study, that sociotropy was found as the strongest predictor for both genders can be related to the fact that Turkish society has the characteristics of both individualist and collectivist cultural features although collectivist cultural features are more dominant. It can be thought that this structure can contribute to sociotropy which values the opinions of others and needs approval in behaviors. The reason why autonomous personality trait, which was defined as "the investment that sustain and increase the

independency and individual rights” by Beck, was another predictor in women can stem from the fact that the participants have higher degrees of education. When the social likeability factor of women steps in, it can be said that the women gave answers that are more approved or preferred by the society in the data collection process even though they have different attitudes or opinions about the matter.

In the Turkish society, families are more involved in the process, and the family structure is also a criterion in marriage and partner choice; that is, the expectations and roles brought by the gender roles reflect in the process more (Uçar, 2017). As a consequence, the individual is a part of a wider relationship system (Karandashev, 2015). Inside these wide relationship web, it can be observed that inevitably traditional gender roles become more prominent in an atmosphere where it is affirmed that correct steps are taken with the multiple relationship approvals such as of family, friends and relatives (Mickelson et al., 2006). This can be the reason why traditional gender roles become prominent in women as a predictor. That some study results emphasize that having the attitude of traditional gender roles makes positive contributions to the relationship in marriage proves that the results of the current study is in line with the literature (Davis & Greenstein, 2004; Xu & Lai, 2004).

When it is considered that the majority of the participants are in their emerging adulthood period, it should not be forgotten that there is not an exactly clear picture, and it is seen as a life task that has the possibility to happen among the future goals (Arnett, 2000).

The study was conducted with the participants of emerging, early and mid-adulthood periods. The number of mid-adulthood period participants are few. For the future researches, adolescents and late adulthood can be added in terms of having a more inclusive study. Since the aforementioned periods will differ in terms of being affected by the society’s expectations, adopting gender roles, self-esteem and personality formation processes, cross-sectional studies can be conducted, and more inclusive results can be obtained. Since the cultural texture of Turkey display differences, the future descriptive research with homogenous groups can be conducted with different variables which include religion, ethnicity, family, living with partner, sexual experiences, single-parent family, nuclear family and extended family as well as education and socio-economic status of the participants by considering these differences.

Through the current study which support the importance of marriage expectation, it can be seen that the mental education studies about partner choice and romantic relationship experiences that raise premarital individual awareness are needed. The marriage of a couple and weddings do not necessarily mean that the standard required by marriage are satisfied. It draws the attention that there is a need for informing individuals before marriage instead of raising awareness about marriage after the individuals get married. The number of early adults that do not get married has risen in the last

years. In the future research, their attitudes towards marriage and romantic relationship experiences can be unraveled. As a result, the current study shows that it is important for individuals to know themselves, to realize the formation of gender roles, to improve themselves in accordance with their necessities, and to make them understand their personality traits in marriage expectation. When structuring mental health services, considering gender roles, personalities and beliefs about marriage of the individuals will help them to receive help with a more totalitarian perspective. In addition, it is thought that it is important to discuss the premarital expectations and personality traits of individuals in couple therapies.

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